

# THE HISTORY OF THE MAINE STATE POLICE

Revised and updated January 2006



**1921 - Inspector Harry Thompson**

## **1921**

34 members of the State Highway Police begin work in July under the supervision of the State Highway Commission. 35 additional officers are commissioned in August. The officers, also known as Inspectors, mostly work on a seasonal basis but some are full time.

The inspectors enforce motor vehicle laws and collect money from auto registrations and driver's license fees. Some are issued Harley-Davidson and Indian motorcycles and most are assigned to offices around the state.

Uniforms are army military surplus and are O.D. green in color. The shoulder patches are red background with "State Police" written in white lettering.

## **1922**

The State Highway Police are placed under the supervision of the Secretary of State.

## **1924**

State Highway Police officer Emery O. Gooch of Waterville is killed in a motorcycle accident on Sunken Bridge Hill in Mattawamkeag on August 9<sup>th</sup>.

## **1925**

"An act to enlarge the powers of the State Highway Police" is enacted into law by the Maine Legislature. The legislation allows the Governor to appoint a chief and set the duties and powers of the new separate department.

Arthur H. Field who had served as Lewiston's Police Chief is named the first Chief of the State Police and serves two years.

On July 25<sup>th</sup>, 60 members of the department meet in Augusta with Governor Ralph Owen Brewster and Chief Field. They present their bonds and are commissioned members of the State Highway Police, empowered to enforce all the laws of Maine in addition to the motor vehicle statutes. The new officers are assigned a motorcycle, pistol and a law book and given patrol areas throughout Maine. Their weekly salary consisted of \$28.

On August 30<sup>th</sup>, one of the new officers, Fred A. Foster of Lisbon is killed in

Belfast when his motorcycle collides with a horse drawn wagon.

The uniform remains the same except the shoulder patch is now black with khaki tan lettering and a khaki green pine tree.

### **1926**

The first training Troop takes place at Camp Keyes in Augusta. The Chief names William Hancock the Camp Commander and training takes place from April 12<sup>th</sup> through May 28<sup>th</sup>.

### **1927**

State Adjutant General James W. Hanson, a World War I veteran, is appointed Chief of the State Police and serves nine years.

### **1928**

On August 22<sup>nd</sup>, Inspector Frank C. Wing of Monson is killed in Millinocket when his motorcycle collides with an oil truck.

### **1931**

Uniforms are now a gray French blue with a black shoulder patch with red lettering and a green pine tree.

### **1935**

The Maine Legislature designates the State Highway Police as the Maine State Police. The name change makes official what has been customary for several years. Members are still required to re-enlist every three years. The Inspectors now become known as Troopers.

For the second time in ten years the department expands, increasing its complement of sworn personnel to 100.



**1934 – Trooper Roger Doyle**

### **1936**

The first automobiles used for patrol are purchased. The 47 sedans costing \$515 apiece are bought to replace most of the 46 Harley Davidson motorcycles and 25 sidecars. Several motorcycles remain in use. The patrol vehicles are black and highway safety vehicles are white.



Captain Wilbur H. Towle is named Chief of the State Police by Governor Lewis Brann and serves two years.

### **1936**

The Department is divided into five patrol districts with offices located at Wells, Fairfield, Thomaston, Bangor and Presque Isle. Headquarters is located in Augusta.

### **1937**

The State Bureau of Identification is created and placed under the control of the State Police. The bureau will keep all criminal records in the State.

Hundreds of striking shoe workers riot in Auburn. State Troopers and the Maine National Guard are called in to restore order.

### **1938**

General John W. Healy is appointed Chief by Governor Lewis Barrows and serves for three years.

A new Barracks is constructed along U.S. route 1 in Houlton to serve as the 5<sup>th</sup> District Headquarters replacing the one at Houlton. This building serves until 2000 when it is replaced with a new one.

### **1940**

A new Barracks is completed in Thomaston on route 1 next to the State Prison.

The first two-way radios are put to use within the department. State Police radio communication centers are located in Augusta, Scarborough, and Wells.

### **1941**

The new State Police Headquarters building at 36 Hospital Street in Augusta is completed and dedicated on October 2, 1941. Prior to that various administrative offices had been located at the State Adjutant's office, at the State Highway Commission and the Augusta Airport.

Police cruisers are now black with medium blue fenders. We will return to all black cars in 1942.

Henry P. Weaver is appointed Chief by Governor Sumner Sewall and serves two years.

December 7<sup>th</sup>, the Japanese attack Pearl Harbor and the U.S. enters the War. State Police institute statewide training programs in cooperation with county and municipal law enforcement agencies in the area of Civil Defense. Before War's end almost 25 % of the agency will take a leave of absence to serve in the armed forces.

Troopers are issued Thompson submachine guns for the duration of the War.

### **1942**

On March 19<sup>th</sup> the State is divided into six new troop areas:

- Troop A – Wells
- Troop B – West Scarborough
- Troop C – Fairfield
- Troop D – Thomaston
- Troop E – Bangor
- Troop F – Houlton

Chief Weaver publishes book on report writing and basic police procedures.

### **1943**

Chief Weaver takes a leave of absence to enter the armed forces.

Captain Lawrence C. Upton is named acting Chief and goes on to serve for 5 years.

On August 17<sup>th</sup> Trooper Lewis Howard of Auburn (at the time a Captain in the Army Air Force) is killed in action when the B-17 "Flying Fortress" he is piloting is shot down over Sicily.

The State Police take on new wartime duties "for the duration." Inland, troopers conduct roadblocks to check for civilians "pleasure driving." It is determined that most operators are workers utilizing government vehicles in violation (wasting gas).

Troopers along the route 1 corridor and the costal side of it monitor traffic to ensure the use of headlight covers. Some large bridges and important areas are guarded by Troopers until later in the War when these duties were taken over by federal soldiers.

### **1944**

On July 23<sup>rd</sup> Trooper Harold Erickson of Portland (a Lt. Colonel in the U.S. Army) is killed in action in France. He receives the Bronze Star and Purple Heart and is buried at Saint Laurent in Normandy France.

Chief Weaver is seriously injured in a Jeep accident in Italy. He will be unable to return to duty.

### **1945**

The Maine Legislature passes a law requiring the Chief of the State Police to come from the commissioned officers

rank of the department. Acting Chief Upton is appointed to the position full time. Captain Joe Young becomes Deputy Chief.

Trooper Guy Bacheller of Clinton is the 27<sup>th</sup> and final officer to take a leave of absence to enter the armed forces.

WWII ends. Most of the officers on leave from the State Police return and resume their duties within the department.

### **1947**

In October forest fires rage out of control across the state. One fire started in Oxford County and blew across York County not stopping until it reached the sea in Kennebunk. A second fire burned scores of mansions in Bar Harbor and much of Mount Desert Island.

The State Police radio system became a lifeline in relaying information to firefighters battling the fires, which eventually burned over 200,000 acres and took 15 lives.

### **1948**

The new barracks on route 1 in Scarborough is completed.

Chief Lawrence Upton dies unexpectedly and Governor Horace Hildreth names Francis McCabe Chief of the State Police. He will go on to serve for six years.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Training Troop is held at the Sanford Airport from April 26<sup>th</sup> to June 19<sup>th</sup>.

### 1950

A new barracks on U.S. Route 2 in Orono is completed and occupied by Troop E at a cost of \$48,000.

Captain Roger Doyle in collaboration with Ford Motor Company helps to develop the first domestic vehicle specifically upgraded for police patrol. Captain Doyle takes delivery of it from Ford Motor Company at the Scarborough barracks in April.



**Chief Weaver**

### 1951

The agency has not purchased any new motorcycles since 1942. The remaining ten motorcycles are sold in July at public Auction.

### 1952

A new Barracks is built on U.S. Route 2 on the west side of Skowhegan to be occupied by Troop C.

A new north wing is added to State Police Headquarters at 36 Hospital Street.

### 1954

Governor Burton Cross appoints Robert Marx Chief of the State Police. He will serve in this capacity for the next 12 years.

The Governor approves a reorganization of the department, providing for a central staff of seven officers:

Chief

Deputy Chief

Five Captains responsible for:

Criminal Division

Special Services

Traffic & Safety

2 field divisions.

### 1955

Troop G is established to Patrol the Maine Turnpike from Kittery to Augusta. A new stretch opened during the summer months from Portland to Augusta.

Troop Detectives are selected for each Troop.

A new Stetson styled hat replaces the cap used since the late 20's. The black shoulder patch is replaced with the one still in use today.



**Troop E, Orono 1956**

A new barracks is built on U.S. Route 1 in Kittery to be used by Troop A.

The old style license plates, changed annually are now replaced with white plates and red lettering designed for use from year to year.

#### **1956**

Roof lights are installed for the first time on patrol vehicles.

The department obtains and puts to use its first polygraph. A polygraph room is outfitted in the basement of State Police Headquarters.

#### **1958**

A new fleet maintenance facility is built behind headquarters at 36 Hospital Street.

The department establishing the first effort at a K-9 unit acquires two bloodhounds.

#### **1959**

A Limerick man upset over finances shoots and kills his wife, the Westbrook Police Chief, and wounds two State Troopers, Willard Parker and Steve Regina. Hundreds of shots are exchanged during the five-hour period and over 100 police officers respond to the scene.

#### **1960**

The 20<sup>th</sup> training Troop takes place at Camp Keyes in Augusta.

#### **1961**

Open collar short sleeve shirts for summer wear are adopted for the first time.

Traffic Division is reorganized. It now is made up of Traffic records and the motor vehicle inspection program.

#### **1964**

Trooper Charles Black is shot to death when he responded to a bank robbery in South Berwick. The perpetrators are captured later in the day by the New Hampshire and Maine State Police bloodhound units. Trooper Black is the fourth officer to die in the line of duty and the first killed by gunfire.

The Maine State Police Trooper Of The Year Award is instituted in memory of Trooper Black. Trooper Herman Boudreau of Freeport will become the first Trooper of the Year.

#### **1965**

The south wing of Augusta Headquarters is completed.

Patrol vehicles are changed from black to medium blue in color. The white and red license plates are replaced with blue plates and white lettering. These plates are still in use today.

#### **1966**

Governor John Reed appoints Parker Hennessey chief. Hennessey will remain chief for 8 years.

#### **1968**

The Criminal Intelligence unit is formed to investigate white collar and organized crime.



Patrol vehicles are now blue with white roofs. We will return to all blue cars in 1972.

#### **1969**

The Trooper's workweek is changed from a 6-day week to 6 on and 2 off.

#### **1970**

276 people lose their lives on Maine highways. The most ever for one year Troopers investigate the majority of the crashes.

The department switches to four door sedans for patrol vehicles going away from the two door models historically used by the department.

#### **1971**

70 Troopers are dispatched to Madawaska to maintain order during a labor strike at the Fraser paper Co. A confrontation between Troopers and strikers and their families resulted in six State Police vehicles being damaged.

The Maine State Troopers Association is formed to represent the Troopers and Sergeants in contractual matters.

#### **1972**

The Maine Department of Public Safety is formed and the State Police become part of the agency. State Police Major Eddie Marx of Thomaston is the first Commissioner of Public Safety.

In July NESPAC is invoked for the first time and 150 other State Police officers from around New England join 50 Maine Troopers in a gambling raid at the Poland Spring Inn. 60 people are arrested.

#### **1973**

The corporal rank is instituted. All detectives from the Criminal Division and a number of troopers totaling 60 are promoted to the new rank.

Troop G moves to new headquarters in Gardiner.

The 29<sup>th</sup> Training Troop is the first to graduate from the Maine Criminal Justice Academy located on Silver Street in Waterville.

#### **1974**

Parker Hennessey dies suddenly while working in his office. Deputy Chief Donald Nichols is appointed by Governor Ken Curtis to replace him. Nichols will serve for two years.

Troop I is established out of the Orono barracks to patrol the Interstate from Augusta to Houlton. This Troop was dissolved and the officers were rolled in to the respective geographical troops in 1984.

Troops A, B, & G along with the Southern Criminal Division are relocated to a new facility on U.S. route 1 in Scarborough.

Legislation establishing a mandatory retirement age is passed. Several long time officers are forced into retirement.

The agency changes to a new high collar dress blouse still in use today.

#### **1975**

Major J. Edward Marks retires from the State Police after a 50-year career. Marks is considered the "Dean of the Nations State Troopers." He was one of the original officers hired in 1925.

The first aircraft is acquired by the agency for speed enforcement. Trooper Brad Cochran of Troop A is the first pilot.

### **1976**

Governor James Longley appoints Deputy Chief Alan H. Weeks of Wiscasset to chief. He will remain chief for 11 years.

The agency purchases citizen band radios for the patrol force. The radios are popular with the motoring public and will serve as a communications resource for highway safety.

The underwater recovery unit (dive team) is formed.

In August the newly formed State Police Emergency Response Unit (now known as the tactical team) responds to it's first call in Greenwood City. A gunman had opened fire upon two Troopers when they responded to a disturbance call. The man was arrested without incident after an all night siege.

### **1977**

Upon the graduation of the 34<sup>th</sup> training Troop, Trooper Anna Polvinen of West Paris becomes the first woman Trooper.

The more powerful Smith & Wesson .357 magnum replaces the .38 caliber service revolver.

The mandatory retirement age is removed.

### **1978**

The aircraft enforcement unit becomes a permanent part of the agency after it proves itself as a useful enforcement tool.

### **1980**

While setting up a roadblock for a high-speed chase on U.S. route 2 in Palmyra, Trooper Tom Merry is killed when the fleeing vehicle collides with his police cruiser. Merry is the fifth officer to die in the line of duty.

In April 90 Troopers are assigned to the Maine State Prison in Thomaston for six weeks for a prison lock-down. The lock-down is the largest assignment of State Police personnel over an extended period of time in the agency's history.

The canine unit is reestablished and Troopers William Bruso and Paul Gallagher of troop B are sent to the Massachusetts State Police Academy for training.

The first BAT mobile is put into service. BAT, an acronym for breath alcohol testing, is a specifically equipped van for rural OUI details.

George Bush is sworn in as Vice President of the United States. Troopers become involved in security at his home in Kennebunkport that continues to this day.

Two escaped convicts from the Maine State Prison began the longest manhunt in State Police history. The search was concentrated around Moody Mountain in the Searsmont area. For 22 days hundreds of Troopers, Deputy Sheriffs, Game Wardens and canine units were involved in the search. Trooper Dennis Hayden of China and his k-9 eventually captured the pair.



**1982**

Troop J is established and headquartered from a new barracks on route 191 in Jackson (East Machias).

The Maine State Police canine school graduates its first four teams at Colby College in Waterville.

**1983**

150 Troopers and detectives provide security for the National Governor's Conference in Portland. It is the largest callout for Troopers in a single event in the agency's history.

**1985**

The first State Police awards night is held to honor employees, retirees, and civilians.

Retirement is changed from a 20 year to 25-year retirement for all new hires.

The State Police institute the motto "Semper Aequus" (Always Just).

**1986**

The Maine State Crime Laboratory is completed next to headquarters on Hospital Street.

Trooper Michael Veilleux is killed on June 17<sup>th</sup> in Dayton in a cruiser accident. He is the sixth Trooper to die in the line of duty.

Troop G relocates to its present location along the Turnpike in South Portland.

**1987**

Governor John McKernan names Captain Andrew Demers of New Gloucester as the 12<sup>th</sup> Chief of the State Police. Demers will be chief for 6 years.

**1988**

9mm Beretta semiautomatic pistols are issued to sworn personnel to replace the 357 Smith & Wesson revolvers.

**1989**

Detective Giles Landry of New Gloucester is shot and killed while investigating a child abuse case in the town of Leeds, becoming the 7<sup>th</sup> officer to die in the line of duty.

Troop A moves into its new barracks on route 2 in the town of Alfred. Troop B moves to a newly constructed barracks on route 26 in Gray. The old barracks on route 1 in Scarborough is closed.

**1990**

The new fleet maintenance facility along the turnpike in South Portland is opened.

The last surviving original trooper from 1925, Lt. Foster King, dies at his home in Rangeley at the age of 95.

**1991**

The Maine Law Enforcement Officers Memorial, located next to the State House is dedicated on May 25<sup>th</sup>.

**1993**

Governor John McKernan names Lt Colonel Alfred R. Schofield as Chief. He will serve for five years.

**1994**

Trooper Jeffrey Parola is killed when his cruiser crashes in Sidney while en route to a tactical team call. He becomes the eighth officer to die in the line of duty.

The Bomb Disposal team is formed after the military disbands the unit maintained at the Brunswick Naval Air Station.

**1996**

Trooper James Griffith becomes the ninth officer to die in the line of duty when his cruiser is struck by another vehicle on route 1 in Warren.

**1997**

Construction is completed at the State Police Crime Lab. The addition houses the new DNA section.

The 45<sup>th</sup> Training Troop commences on July 13<sup>th</sup>, graduating December 19<sup>th</sup> with 37 new Troopers.

In August, NESPAC is invoked after an emergency request for immediate assistance comes from the Colonel of the New Hampshire State Police. In Colebrook, Carl Drega has shot and killed two New Hampshire State Troopers, a judge, and a news reporter. The gunman then steals one of the State Police cruisers and flees the scene. Nine Troopers from Troops B & G respond and before the afternoon is over the Troopers would find themselves in Northern Vermont. Two more officers from Vermont would be wounded in the final shootout. The gunman is killed in the exchange. Two troopers from Traffic Division respond to map the various crime scenes, and CID detectives respond to assist with the investigation.

On October 17<sup>th</sup>, Detective Glenn Strange dies from complications as the result of an assault while making an arrest.

**1998**

Lt Colonel Malcolm T. Dow of Houlton becomes the new Chief when Governor Angus King nominates him. He will serve for two years.

The 46<sup>th</sup> Training Troop commences September 20<sup>th</sup>, graduating April 2<sup>nd</sup> with 33 new Troopers. It is the longest training class to date, consisting of 28 weeks of instruction.

**2000**

The new Barracks on U.S. route 1 in Houlton is opened. This building was constructed behind the one built in 1938. The old one is torn down.

On October 4<sup>th</sup> the 47<sup>th</sup> Training Troop graduates. This will become the last full Academy exclusively for State Police Recruits.

Governor Angus King names Michael Sperry of Carrabassett Valley as Chief. He will serve for four years.

**2001**

The new Criminal Justice Academy is opened at the old Oak Grove Coburn School on route 201 in Vassalboro.

The 48<sup>th</sup> Training Troop graduates. This is the first class to graduate from what is to be known as the “post school”, held for recruits certified as police officers by the Maine Criminal Justice Academy.

**2002**

Troopers investigate the deadliest crash in Maine history on September 12<sup>th</sup>. A van with fifteen occupants plunges off John’s Bridge in Northern Piscataquis County. The van falls into the river below drowning fourteen of the occupants.

**2003**

All sworn members are provided with laptop computers when the agency switches over to computer based reporting.

## 2004

Governor John Baldacci names Craig Poulin of China as the 16<sup>th</sup> Chief of the State Police.

Troopers investigate a Mother's Day crash that killed seven people on I-95 in Carmel. It is the second deadliest crash in Maine history and the deadliest on Maine's Interstate system.

State Police Headquarters is moved from Hospital Street to the Belgrade Road.

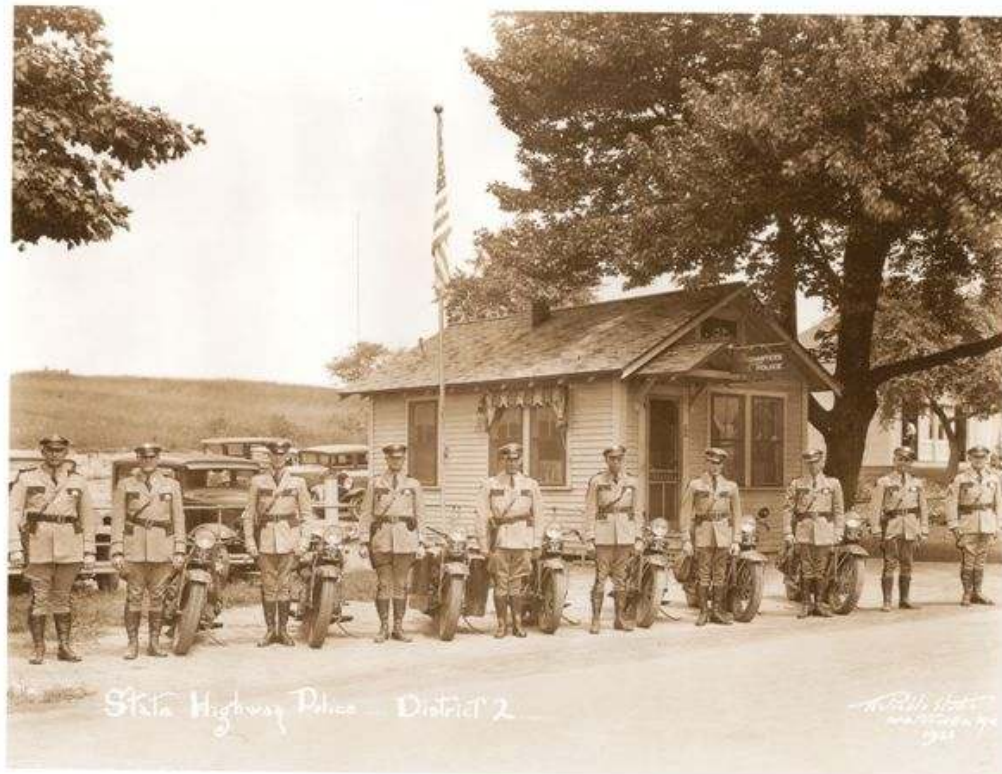
Twenty-six Troopers and three supervisors are assigned to Boston,

Massachusetts for 6 days when NESPAC is invoked to assist the Massachusetts State Police with the Democratic National Convention.

## 2005

On August 29<sup>th</sup> the administration combines Troop B covering Oxford, Androscoggin, & Cumberland Counties into Troop A. Troop G covering the Turnpike now becomes known as Troop B.

Troop Barracks in East Machias is closed and moved to rte 182 in Ellsworth.



**State Highway Police District 2 Barracks, Fairfield 1933**

# *History of the Maine State Police*

## *1921-2006*



